Cedar Rapids, IA
Flood Recovery 2008

- Cedar Rapids, IA - Flood June 13, 2008
- Cedar River swells 2 miles wide (typical width 600ft)
- 10 square miles and 1,400 city blocks flooded
- 7,749 parcels impacted (5,900 residential)
- 5,900 residential – 50% rental and 60% over age 65
- 1,281 businesses affected – 900 flooded
- 18,000 residents displaced
- Local, state and federal agencies all flood in the downtown
- 423 boat rescues (community evacuations began June 10)
- 0 deaths
- Services delivered to unaffected portions of city
- $7 Billion disaster – total community property valuation $3.3 Billion
- 5th largest disaster
Cedar Rapids, IA
Flood Recovery 2008
Cedar Rapids, IA
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- Cedar Rapids, IA second largest city in Iowa
- Cedar River watershed is 6,500 square miles
Great minds discuss ideas; Average minds discuss events; Small minds discuss people.

Eleanor Roosevelt, *US diplomat & reformer (1884-1962)*
Cedar Rapids, IA
Flood Recovery 2008

- **Vision** - Leaders moved quickly (i.e., get in front of rebuilding “as is”) to plan and prevent future flooding with an implementation strategy
- **Public participation** – Two phases of planning designed to engage 3,000 stakeholders (i.e., champions of the process) to ensure sustained decision-making and implementation
- **Collaboration** - Multiple levels of government, agencies across the community and all departments in the city
- **Relationship building** – Developed new partnerships with federal, state and local agencies plus new grass roots groups – *don’t take it or make it personal*
- **Problem solving** – No “manuals” for disaster recovery, developed strategy of convening agencies that could contribute to solutions (i.e., frame problems with 2 to 3 solutions)
- **Adaptation and innovation** – The flood changed Cedar Rapids - so the community changed (i.e., social services, contractor licensing, more communication tools)
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- 7.5 miles of structural and non-structural elements
- 230 acres of new floodway and green space
- Framework for all recovery decisions and new policies
- Strategy defined by the public (not technicians)
Cedar Rapids, IA
Flood Recovery 2008

Cedar River Greenway
Cedar Rapids, IA
Flood Recovery 2008

Building a greater community for our kids’ kids
Cedar Rapids, IA
Flood Recovery 2008
Cedar Rapids, IA
Flood Recovery 2008

Results in Cedar Rapids, IA:

1) **Accelerated Planning 11/08 and 5/09**
   - First community to lead Army Corps of Engineers Feasibility Study and collapsed a 5 year process down to 18 months
   - Plans validate resident interests
   - Build support for repeated requests for gap funds and rule changes - $350 M (i.e., fast track housing request and property acquisition, modify federal rules for business, redevelopment of historic properties and local match for flood protection, etc.)

2) **Construction Study Area 12/08**
   - City prohibit use of rebuilding funds in path of future flood protection
   - State and federal government follow
   - More than 1,200 parcels acquired and over 1,000 demolitions ($168M) and flood protection underway

3) **Residential and Business Programs**
   - Create first business programs in US history with CDBG and retain 85%
   - Focus on *unique* needs – create afford hsg, sustainable policies, infill targeted

4) **Population Grows by 4 % 2010 census**
   - Housing recovery tops community priorities
   - 1,400 new dwelling units (down payment assistance must be used in city limits)
Cedar Rapids, IA
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Results in Cedar Rapids, IA:

5) Plans drive decision making and new local policies
   • Designed and approved by interdisciplinary teams through
   • Informed consent – public/private plan advocates
   • Plans created reportable and measurable results and more than 60% implemented to date

6) Community Wellness Addressed
   • Critical incident debriefings and regular reflective discussions
   • Contracts with social service agencies to triage financial and psychological needs

7) GRI
   • State Flood Mitigation Board awards city $264 million toward flood protection.

National Recognitions - American Planning Association, Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA

2014 All-America City
TIME magazines Boomtown 4/12
Forbes Best Places for Business and Careers 6/11 and 4/10
CNN and Money magazines Best Places for Affordable Homes – 7/10
Cedar Rapids, IA
Flood Recovery 2008

Create a Vibrant, Destination Riverfront: Amphitheater

A new 5,000-person amphitheater is located on Western Bank of the Cedar River, orienting to a stage at the River’s edge and overlooking May’s Island and the Downtown. The amphitheater could be used for informal performances or closed off for concerts that would draw people to Cedar Rapids and generate revenue for the City.
Cedar Rapids, IA
Flood Recovery 2008